



Forest Practices News

April 2007

Forest Practices Awards 2007

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The Board of the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) has initiated new awards to recognise excellence and continuous improvement in forest practices. The Forest Practices Awards publicly acknowledge some of the many people working in forestry in Tasmania who consistently display excellence in applying the forest practices system in their particular work.

Preparing, implementing or supervising Forest Practices Plans requires skill and experience. The Tasmanian forest practices system is complex and continually evolving and is based on continual improvement and cooperation between all parties. It's the

high standards achieved by those who implement the forest practices system which help achieve this co-operation and continual improvement.

The Board has created six awards to recognise excellence in different aspects of the forest practices system. The Board received 17 high-standard nominations, all of which were for inspiring work.

The Board judged the nominations and selected seven winners. The awards were made on Thursday March 22nd 2007 by the Chair of the Board, Isobel Stanley. The ceremony took place at Somercotes, near Ross, and all those present enjoyed celebrating with the winners in warm sunshine.



The inaugural Forest Practices Awards winners with FPA Board members, from top left: Graham Wilkinson (FPA), Rodney and Glenys Bye (Select Logging Pty.Ltd.), Neil Denney (retired from Forestry Tasmania), Bob Hamilton (Forestry Tasmania), Scott Marriott (Forestry Tasmania), Isobel Stanley (FPA) and Max Triffett (Kevin Morgan). From bottom left: Terry Ware (Forestry Tasmania) and Mark Wapstra (formerly with FPA, now consultant).

Central and right banner photographs above by Forestry Tasmania.
All photographs by the Forest Practices Authority, unless otherwise stated.

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Award Category	Outcome	Nominee	Nominated By	
Preparing Forest Practices Plans	Winner	Terry Ware (FT)	Steve Davis (FT) FPA Staff	
Inspecting and Supervising Forest Operations	Winner	Scott Marriott (FT)	Craig Patmore (FT)	
Conducting forest operations to high operational standards	Winner	Rodney and Glenys Bye (Select Logging)	Craig Patmore (FT)	
	Winner	Max Triffett (Kevin Morgan Pty Ltd)	Peter Williams (FT)	
	Runner up	Geoff and Kevin Muskett (Muskett & Sons)	Craig Patmore (FT)	
	Runner up	Michael Woods (Eastern Tiers Logging)	Elphinstone Weighing Systems and Logging Trailers	
	Runner up	Highlander	Peter Williams (FT)	
Innovation in forest practices	Winner	Neil Denney and Bob Knox (FT)	Peter Rowlands (FT)	
	Runner up	Greg Williams (FT) and David Mifsud (FT)	Peter Bird (FT)	
	Runner up	Dennis Lewis (Gunns Tamar) + team	Owen Hoffman (Gunns Tamar)	
	Runner up	Frank Miller (Gunns Tamar)	Gunns Tamar	
	Runner up	Mark Oliver (FEA)	Andy Corbould (FEA)	
Excellence in Community Relations in regard to forest practices	Winner	FT Mersey Planning Team	Peter Rowlands (FT)	
	Runner up	Errol Lohrey (FT)	Peter Williams (FT)	
	Runner up	FT Huon Planning Team	Steve Davis (FT)	
	Runner up	Mike Peterson (FT)	Paul Smith (FT)	
Excellence in research, advice and services to forest managers	Winner	Mark Wapstra (FPA)	Sean Blake (Consultant) FPA staff	



Forest Practices Awards 2007



Editors' corner

The Forest Practices Awards features strongly in this issue as we believe it's a great initiative. There are so many good stories of dedicated people in the forest practices system who are committed to achieving high standards. It's been our privilege to print some of these stories - we hope you feel encouraged and inspired by the award winners' work.

We encourage all our readers to share

some of their experiences. If you have an experience you think others could learn from, please contact the editors. Please include illustrations and a photo of yourself with your contributions and ensure that figures/pictures are sent as separate files and not embedded in Word documents.

Contributions can be supplied either as hard copy or electronically. If forwarding material electronically, the

address is:

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Christine Grove and Peter McIntosh
Forest Practices News Editors

**Deadline for contributions
for the next FPN:
Mid-July 2007**

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Terry Ware

Terry received the award for excellence in preparing Forest Practices Plans, for which the criteria were consistency, clarity, high quality, freedom from errors and innovation or excellence in dealing with complex or challenging issues for one or more plans.

Terry works for Forestry Tasmania in the Huon District as a Forest Practices Officer – Planning (Sales). He has many years of experience in preparing Forest Practices Plans (FPPs) and is well respected in the forest practices system for the quality of the plans he prepares. Many of the FPPs he prepares involve complex issues which he deals with in a non-confrontational and cooperative manner.

Terry's commitment goes beyond adherence to the Forest Practices Code – he also works with the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) to develop new practical guidelines.

He contributes to scientific papers on Forest Practices Code development with FPA staff and has presented talks at a research symposium.



Nominators' comments

Terry was nominated by FPA staff, Mark Wapstra, from ECOtas, and Steve Davis from Forestry Tasmania. Some of things his nominators said of Terry were:

'He personifies the cooperative forest industry/FPA approach to achieving best practices in Tasmania.'

'He has 100% commitment to achieving good environmental outcomes.'

'His key to success is time: time spent in the field, additional field trips with specialists and time given to planning and consultation and promotion.'

'During the planning process, Terry uses planning tools diligently, is generous with his time in the field and is very observant – he sees things other people might miss.'



Terry in a coupe bordering the Little Denison River in the Southern Forests. Several special values were catered for during the planning of the coupe. A 'Priority A' flora community (*Wet Eucalyptus viminalis*), a wooden tramway probably dating from the 1950s, goshawk habitat and Denison crayfish habitat were protected by reserves. Terry examines the map showing the reserves in front of the *E. viminalis* (bottom left photograph) and points out the tramway (top photograph) and the axle from the tram (bottom right photograph).



Terry Ware

Terry says...

I've been working with Forestry Tasmania (FT) for 30 years – and before that I was a logging contractor. When I first started with FT there was no forest practices system – we just made up rules as we went along. Sometimes we'd get to the end of an operation and look at it and knew we could have done a better job.

Things are much better now that we have the forest practices system, which was started in 1985 and is regulated by the Forest Practices Authority. Now we have the Forest Practices Code which guides our planning and operations. It's much easier to prepare a Forest Practices Plan (FPP) using the Code because we know where we stand with it. Of course there are sometimes difficult issues when we are preparing a FPP, but discussion with the FPA's specialists can resolve most of these.

The Code is a practical, usable set of standards which we foresters feel we own and can trust. That's because it has been developed over the years through a process of continual improvement. Periodically the Code is reviewed and everyone can contribute any improvements they have come up with.

The FPA, who oversee the forest practices system, discuss any changes to the system with foresters. The FPA's



Terry looks at a recently logged coupe from Glovers Bluff viewpoint in the Southern Forests. This coupe had many special values and involved all six FPA specialists. During the planning, Terry found a couple of cut logs and consulted the FPA's cultural values specialist in case the logs were from an old walking track, resulting in a half hectare reserve around the logs. The FPA's geoscientist was consulted over karst and dolomite features. The reserve for the class 2 stream protected all the dolomite features. The FPA's soil and water specialist was consulted about the soils in three class four streams because they had some erosion and possible siltation characteristics. A reserve was placed around these which also protected Blackwood forest. The FPA's zoology specialist advised that goshawks and the Denison crayfish would be protected by the Blackwood forest reserve around the streams. The FPA's botany specialist advised that the priority B forest type, *Eucalyptus obliqua* forest linked with Baura, would regenerate well naturally. The FPA's landscape specialist was consulted about the landscape values as the coupe is visible from a tourist viewpoint. The edges were rounded and a reserve was created in the middle of the coupe. The reserved area totaled around one third of the coupe area.

specialists will ask foresters for feedback during the process of developing new prescriptions or guidelines. It's this co-operation which ensures that the forest practices system is continually improving.

I've had lots of training in my 30 years at FT. I've now completed the FPA's

Forest Practices Officer (FPO) course three times. The first time was in the early days. Then I did the course to become an inspecting FPO and again to become a planning FPO. I've also done a lot of the courses run by the FPA's specialists such as fauna, flora, landscape and cultural heritage.

I'm almost at the age where I could retire, but I'm not ready to. I feel that I am well trained and can still contribute lots to the forest industry thorough training and advising others and continually lifting the standards of FPPs.

I feel a bit embarrassed about being singled out for the award for preparing FPPs. Really, it's a team effort – we all work together to prepare plans. There are many different skills needed to prepare a good plan, so credit belongs equally to my colleagues.

Editors' note: See Forest Practices News September 2006 for an article on Terry and others preparing a Forest Practices Plan for a coupe near Southport (available on the FPA website).



Terry stands in front of a reserve in a clearfelled coupe in the Southern Forests. The reserves in the coupe were designed to protect several special values; Denison crayfish, *Thysanotus rodwayi* (a bizarre plant which spends most of its life underground), *Eucalyptus viminalis*, the Mount Mangana stag beetle and the water catchment for the Snowy Range Trout Fishery.

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Scott Marriott

Scott received the award for excellence in inspecting and supervising forest operations, for which the criteria were diligence in the inspection and management of forest practices issues in the forest.

Scott Marriott works for Forestry Tasmania in the Derwent District as a sales supervisor supervising harvesting contractors in the central highlands harvesting uneven aged *Eucalyptus delegatensis*. He started his forestry career more than 20 years ago as a harvesting contractor, giving him a good rapport with the contractors he supervises.

The standard of work carried out by his contractors has risen from an 80% rating in 2002-2003 to 97% in 2005-2006. Scott's role in the coupe scheduling of both Forestry Tasmania and Gunns Ltd harvesting operations has improved compliance with the wet weather limitations in the *Forest Practices Code*. These require operations to stop if the ground is too wet.

A particular interest of Scott's has been the coupe harvesting start-up procedure on State forest, which involves explaining the *Forest Practices Plan* and the *Forest Practices Code* to the machinery operators.

Scott says...

I've been working in forestry since 1985. Since 1995 I have been employed by Forestry Tasmania (FT) to supervise operations in the central highlands. I mainly work in *Eucalyptus*

delegatensis shelterwood forests in the area from Ouse west to 10 km west of Derwent Bridge, north to Great Lake and east to Bothwell. Every day is different. It's very satisfying because I've been involved in developing the *Forest Practices Plan* (FPP), scheduling the operation and monitoring and assessing the operation – it's satisfying to see it through to the end.

The shelterwood system is really well suited to *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forest. It's quite a challenging system to manage, requiring skill and experience. When we are cutting the forest for the first time, we leave some trees to supply seed and to shelter regeneration. The regeneration needs shelter because the highlands are cold; the trees which are left behind act like a blanket and encourage better growth.

We decide how many trees to leave by working out the basal area, which is a measure of the cross-sectional area of the stems of trees there should be per hectare after the operation. We

leave a basal area of 12m² per hectare which roughly equates to five trees in a 30m² area. It takes experience to know which trees to leave and which to harvest. We take out the trees which will make big sawlogs. Some that would not make good sawlogs are taken out for pulp.

An essential element of the shelterwood system is ensuring that the retained trees are not damaged by the operation. We use skilled fallers to fell the trees we are taking out in such a way that the trees we are leaving behind are not damaged. We also used skilled skidder operators who take care not to bump into the retained trees. We often have to pay these experienced contractors a higher-than-usual rate.

Regeneration generally takes place well with this system. There is normally no need to collect extra seed for sowing as the trees which are left as seed trees can provide enough seed to regenerate the coupe.

Nominator's comments

Scott was nominated by Craig Patmore from Forestry Tasmania, who said:

'Scott's practical experience and ability to think ahead enables him to strive for excellence with the practical aspects of forest practices.'

(Right) Scott receiving his award from Isobel Stanley. (Far right) Scott conducting a Progressive Harvesting Assessment in *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forest. (Photograph by FT)



Scott Marriott

After 10 or 12 years we return to the coupe and take out the big trees which have provided shelter to the regeneration, giving the regeneration saplings a chance to grow faster. We return again after about 20 to 30 years to carry out another thinning, again leaving some trees for seeds and shelter and the cycle begins again.

When this system is carried out well, the forest can look as if it hasn't been logged at all. It provides a sustained yield of forest products and can continue indefinitely. *Eucalyptus delegatensis* timber is highly sought after as it is strong, clean and white. Some of it is sent off to veneer mills.

I've had quite a lot of training to do the job I do, like learning how to manage operations in the forest, how to work out the basal area and which trees to take out or leave. I completed the Forest Practices Authority's training to become an Inspecting Forest Practices Officer in 2001. Now I'm involved with training FT staff.

For the last two years I've been involved in the team developing FPPs for the highlands. The *Forest Practices Code* has restrictions on operating in wet conditions so coupes are identified as suitable for operations to take place in the wetter winter or the drier summer. If wet weather does stop operations, there is generally another more suitable coupe which contractors can work in.

Once the FPP has been certified, part of my role is to explain to the contractors what is in the plan. I helped develop the coupe harvesting start up procedure for State forest. This involves meeting with the contractor before operations start and we walk through the coupe discussing the FPP. I highlight any values identified in the plan and any taped-off areas, such as habitat clumps which are left for conservation reasons. We may find some other issues, such as dangerous trees. Once everything is clear, the contractor signs off on the coupe, stating that he understands the FPP. I generally work with around seven contractors at any one time. As well as supervising them, I



(Top photograph) Scott coaching felling machine operator Peter Voss on which type of trees are to be felled to meet the prescription. (Middle photograph) Felling machine selecting and falling *Eucalyptus delegatensis* tree. (Bottom photograph) Forest which was harvested in 2006-2007. The felling prescription is for shelterwood leaving a basal of 12-14m². This picture shows a good stocking of regrowth after harvesting. (Photographs by FT.)

also provide training to enable them to meet FT's standards.

Often I liaise with other agencies, such as local councils and National Parks. For example, sometimes we have coupes which are visible from Lake St

Clair National Park. We consult with the park authorities during the planning stage to plan an operation we are all satisfied with.

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Rodney and Glenys Bye

Rodney and Glenys received one of the two awards given for excellence in conducting forest operations to high operational standards.

Rodney and Glenys run Select Logging Pty. Ltd. which has been contracted by Forestry Tasmania since December 1997 to carry out selective logging in the Tasmanian central highlands. During the last three years, Select Logging has harvested over 1000 hectares of *Eucalyptus delegatensis* in the central highlands, all of which have met Forestry Tasmania's quality standards.

Select Logging achieved AS/NZS ISO 9002 for company management systems – perhaps the only contractor in Tasmania to do so. This lapsed in 2004 but the guidelines are still used to set operational standards.

Rodney and Glenys have various harvesting machines to selectively harvest the different *E. delegatensis* forest types and sizes. They manage up to four separate harvesting operations at any one time in subcoupes as small as seven hectares. Their professionalism gives Forestry Tasmania the confidence to schedule them in sensitive coupes, such as areas with visual landscape and other special values prescriptions.

Rodney says...

It's great for us that we have won this forest practices award. For us, it's an acknowledgement of the quality of

work which we strive to achieve. Our motto is safety and quality before quantity. Because of this ethos, we are not just focused on prices and so we don't always offer the most competitive price. Now, thanks to this award, we can justify our approach. This will help in maintaining high standards as it will justify our rates, which are higher than some other contractors'.

I've been in the forestry business all my life. My father had a sawmill at Liffey. I started off working for others, then I

bought my first truck and eventually I bought this logging company.

I work in *Eucalyptus delegatensis* most of the time. This type of forest is found in the highlands and is selectively logged – that means that we don't clearfell it, we select trees to take out. The trees which we leave behind provide seed and shelter for the regeneration of the coupe.

I have seen quite a few changes in



Eucalyptus delegatensis forest before harvesting (top photograph). The same coupe after selective logging, leaving the trees which will become the shelterwood (bottom photograph). (Photographs by Select Logging.)

Nominator's comments

Craig Patmore, from Forestry Tasmania's Derwent District, nominated Rodney and Glenys. He said of the company:

'The benefits of Select Logging continually achieving the harvesting prescriptions and exceeding the quality standards can be seen immediately post harvesting with a site stocked with established good quality trees within an uneven aged native forest structure.'



Rodney and Glenys Bye



Rodney and Glenys Bye accepting their Forest Practices Award from Isobel Stanley at the ceremony.

selective logging since I started working in forestry. In the old days we would take out any tree you could put your arm around and we would leave the others as seed trees to regenerate the forest. Then we started taking a more scientific approach and we worked out how many trees to take by working out the basal area, which gives a measure of the cross-sectional area of the stems of trees there should be per hectare. Now we also have an emphasis on the quality of the trees we are leaving and their location. We aim for an even spread of shelterwood and seedtrees across the coupe.

Selective logging requires a lot of skill. It's important not to damage the trees that are left behind. We do this by using directional felling, carefully planning snig tracks and cutting logs to length before snigging so that there are no tree crowns being dragged through the coup. It's very important that the skidder drivers are skilled in avoiding the trees which are left. Another skilled area, requiring lots of experience, is working out the basal area.

Some of the forest we work in has been logged before and some has not. *Eucalyptus delegatensis* needs

disturbance to regenerate and selective logging provides just that. The forest will regenerate naturally so well that there is no need for sowing seed. After 20 years the shelterwood and seed trees will be removed to give the regenerated saplings a chance to grow. These will take about 90 years to mature to sawlog size. And then the cycle starts again.

We work with FT during the preparation of the Forest Practices Plan (FPP) to help site the roads and the landing sites. When the FPP is certified, we meet with the FT supervisor on-site and discuss the plan, including the special values and issues. The prescriptions for managing these are explained and then we sign off on the FPP, stating that we have read and understood it. FT's supervisor monitors and assesses our performance.

It's a challenge to adhere to the FPP and still maintain a viable business. There are times when we struggle financially, especially if we have a wet winter as the *Forest Practices Code* requires us to stop work in muddy conditions. Normally we can move to a drier landing and keep working. All our workers have pride in their work and we work together to achieve the high standards we are so proud of.



Rodney Bye accepting his Forest Practices Award at the ceremony.



Regeneration under shelterwood at Tibbs Marsh. Once the regrowth is mature enough, the shelterwood will be harvested. (Photograph by Select Logging)

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Max Triffett and logging crew

Max received the second award for excellence in conducting forest operations to high operational standards.

Max and his logging crew work for Kevin Morgan Pty. Ltd. Max has been working in forestry for 22 years, the last seven of which he has been working with selective logging as a Forestry Tasmania mill door contractor in Bass District.

For the last 5 years Max has been selectively harvesting areas of high altitude *Eucalyptus delegatensis*. Max's experience in falling techniques and attention to detail has ensured that the forest has been harvested in compliance with the prescriptions with maximum retention to the future sawlog resource.

Max in action felling a tree (below) and accepting his Forest Practices Award at the ceremony (below right). (Photograph below by Max and crew.)



Nominator's comments

Max was nominated by Peter Williams of Forestry Tasmania's Bass District, who said:

'Max's management techniques ensure that the operation runs to a high standard, with snig tracks corded and matted and special values identified and protected. Any additional values found during harvesting are always reported for further advice.'



Max Triffett and logging crew

Max says...

I find my job satisfying because every day brings a new challenge – every forest block is different and every tree needs to be felled differently. I've been working in forestry for 22 years now, the last seven of which I've been working with selective logging. I much prefer working with selective logging to other types of logging. It's a real challenge and demands a lot more experience and skill.

I work as the bush boss of a logging crew contracted to Forestry Tasmania. The first step in the process is when Forestry Tasmania talk us through the Forest Practices Plan. It can seem a bit daunting at this stage, but we tackle it methodically and it becomes clear how to fell each tree.

Communication is an important part of the process – with FT's supervisor and with the people working on the ground. For example, It's important that we discuss with the skidder operator the best location for the snig tracks. These are used for dragging out the logs and it's important that they are placed well to minimise damage to the trees which we leave behind.



The crew in action: Mark Beams operating a 270 excavator (top right), Dillon Morgan moving logs to landing with a cat excavator (middle right) and then trimming logs on the landing and the result of the operation – potential sawlog trees retained (bottom left). (Photographs by Max and crew.)

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Neil Denney and Bob Knox

Neil and Bob received the award for innovation in forest practices. They both received the award for work done for Forestry Tasmania, Mersey District.

One of the benefits of the forest practices system is that it encourages innovation and continual improvement. A good example of this is the project on excavator heaping which won this award for innovation in forest practices.

Selectively logging forest results in a large amount of flammable material. This material was previously reduced by top disposal burns, but these burns entailed many drawbacks.

Neil and Bob developed a new technique called excavator heaping to replace top disposal burns. In contrast to the burns, excavator heaping is cost neutral and delivers many environmental benefits. There is also a socio-economic benefit: a new industry has been created as Mersey District now employs three contractors specifically to carry out the heaping.

Bob and Neil say...

Bob has been working with Forestry Tasmania (FT) for 33 years now. Neil has retired recently but had a similar career path and almost 40 years of service. There are 25 of us in the Works section who do roading, reforestation, fire planning and control, and forest reserve management work. We work together as a team with other sections in FT to carry out this work in accordance with the *Forest Practices Code*. The planning team identify the special values on operational areas and work with the specialists in the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) to work out prescriptions to manage them during the operation. We write the Forest Practices Plan and then supervise the contractors who implement the plan.

Every year, we selectively harvest about 50 coupes in Mersey District totaling about 1800 hectares. This results in a large amount of flammable material

Nominator's comments

Neil and Bob were nominated by Peter Rowlands, of Forestry Tasmania's Mersey District, who said that:

'The work done by both Neil Denney and Bob Knox has seen the system, or variations of the system, being widely adopted in Forestry Tasmania. The refinement of the system has given operational foresters another valuable tool for regeneration and fuel management.'

being left in the coupe which causes a high fire risk. The coupes are often very irregular shapes and cover a lot of terrain which causes many problems for fire breaking and burning.

We used to carry out a top disposal burn to reduce the flammable material in the coupe, but this system had many inherent problems. The fire tended to kill the eucalypt seed and small



Neil Denney (above left) accepts the Forest Practices Award for innovation in forest practices on behalf of Bob Knox and himself at the awards ceremony. Bob Knox (above centre) explaining the excavator heaping system. An excavator (above right) heaps the slash into piles and clears the ground around them. (Photographs above centre and right by Forestry Tasmania.)



Neil Denney and Bob Knox

seedlings and scorch a percentage of the older retained growth; there was a very short time to carry out all the burning in April and May so programs could not be completed; a firebreak was required all around the coupe which was expensive to put in and could potentially cause environmental problems as it ran close to and crossed water courses; and the fire did not burn evenly - the ridges and north facing slopes often burned too hotly and the southern slopes not well enough.

A few years ago we worked with a very skilled excavator operator, Tony Howe, to try various techniques ranging from scarifying all the ground and spreading all the fuels evenly to heaping in small bonfires. From this work the technique now called excavator heaping was born.

The operation takes place a few months after harvesting, once seed has fallen from the branches left in the coupe.

A small excavator (12 tonnes is ideal) moves the slash into heaps in clearings

away from the retained trees. Logs and medium or large sized branches are left to provide the normal level of coarse woody debris on the forest floor to benefit wildlife. The aim is to remove 75% of the flashy fuels from 75% of the area.

The heaps dry out because they are elevated and so they can be burnt when it is wetter in winter. The fire does not spread between the heaps, eliminating in most cases the need for firebreaks. The isolated fires do not damage the retained trees, seeds or seedlings. Game control is less necessary because the initial stocking of seedlings is generally high, there is not a flush of young tender plant shoots stimulated by fire and there is still significant feed other than eucalypt seedlings available as the whole coupe has not been burnt.

The system is cost neutral and delivers many environmental benefits. FT in Mersey District now employs three contractors specifically to carry out the heaping. The operation generally

is best not done by the harvesting contractor as time must elapse after harvesting to allow the seed to drop from the heads and the machines are not ideal for the work.

This system is suitable for all dry forest, as long as it is not very rocky, moderately wet forest and wet forest in visually sensitive sites. However some prescriptions still require a low intensity burn, such as managing forest for quolls where a low intensity burn will stimulate fungi growth.

This system has been very successful and Neil took on a role of promoting and training in it more widely just prior to his retirement. Excavator heaping has been adopted as the silvicultural system of choice by FT across the majority of our dry forest operations. It is also regularly used across private sector operations.

Editor's note: see the article by Bob and Neil on excavator heaping in Forest Practices News vol 5 no 4 (available on the FPA website).



The piles of slash dry out even while the surrounding ground remains wet, which prevents the fires spreading when the heaps are burnt. This is particularly useful when the surrounding forest needs to be retained for a reserve. The photograph above left shows heaps near a protected habitat tree. The photograph above right illustrates how the fire does not spread. (Photographs by Forestry Tasmania.)

Forest Practices Awards 2007

The Planning Team, Forestry Tasmania – Mersey District

The Forestry Tasmania Planning team in Mersey District received the award for excellence in community relations in regard to forest practices. The award was given for the successful solution, from the point of view of all parties involved, of difficult forest planning or operational issues.

At the time when the award-winning work was carried out, Bob Hamilton was the Planning Co-ordinator, Janet Morley, Joe Hawkes and Henry Chan were the planners and Mark Rippon was the GIS expert. The inventory crew of Doug Johnson, Daniel Bowden, Bevan Schramm and Clarrie Ralph also contributed. Bob Hamilton represented the team at the award ceremony.

The Planning Team was given the challenge of planning the harvesting and regeneration back to native forest of a coupe visible from the Leven Canyon car park and lookout.

The key to the satisfactory resolution of this issue was the team's consultation with both the Central Coast Council and the Canyon Bluff Working Group, an interest group particularly concerned with the potential impact of forestry on the landscape and tourist operators in the area.

Bob says...

I've worked in forestry for 33 years. I started off in Smithton and currently work in Mersey District at Devonport. The planning team is comprised of a

Nominator's comments

The Planning Team was nominated by Peter Rowlands of Forestry Tasmania's Mersey District, who said:

'The operation demonstrated Forestry Tasmania's capacity to engage interest groups and neighbours and work towards a successful resolution of a difficult planning issue, to accurately simulate sensitive landscape scenarios and to deliver the undertakings committed to in the Good Neighbour Charter and the Forest Industry Tourism Protocol.'



Bob Hamilton (right) receives the Forest Practices Award on behalf of Forestry Tasmania's Mersey District Planning Team from Isobel Stanley and Graham Wilkinson.

co-ordinator, planners, GIS specialist and inventory staff (who record information about tree species and size).

The planners on our team work on the special values in individual coupes, such as visual landscape, flora, fauna, archaeology, cultural heritage and soil and water. We use tools developed by the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) to identify any special values likely to be present in the coupe and consult with the FPA specialists where required. There are strengths in the forest practices system, particularly

the planning tools and management agreements the FPA have developed with other agencies. These give clear guidelines to FPOs, enabling them to make decisions and reducing the need for specialist advice.

We use Visual Nature Studio software to model visual outcomes. The software uses digital elevation information, photo interpretation type, vegetation/ecosystem tree models and nominated viewpoints to produce realistic landscape models.

It takes the team anything from a few days work to plan the more



An example of one of the landscape scenarios created using Visual Nature Studio. The arrow indicates the position of the coupe. (Image by Forestry Tasmania.)



The Planning Team, Forestry Tasmania – Mersey District

straightforward coupes to several weeks to plan coupes with issues that require FPA specialist assistance. Coupes that involve consultation with community groups can take much longer.

The work which we won the award for started in 2003 when the coupe SM111A, four kilometres west of Leven Canyon lookout and carpark, was scheduled for harvesting and regeneration back to native forest. The forest was wet sclerophyll with a thick understorey. The appropriate silviculture for this type of forest is clearfall, burn and sow.

The community had already expressed concerns about forestry activity visible from the Leven Canyon lookout after some privately owned plantations

adjoining the car park had been harvested. An interest group, the Canyon and Bluff Working Group (CABWG), was particularly concerned about the potential impact on the landscape and tourism operators in the area, and was working on getting the existing reserves around Black Bluff and Leven Canyon extended. SM111A fell within one of their proposed extension areas.

We undertook a detailed visual landscape analysis. The team worked with the FPA's visual landscape specialist on analyzing the potential impacts and finding a coupe shape which would maximize returns and not be visible from the lookout. We used Visual Nature Studio software to model the visual outcomes of various

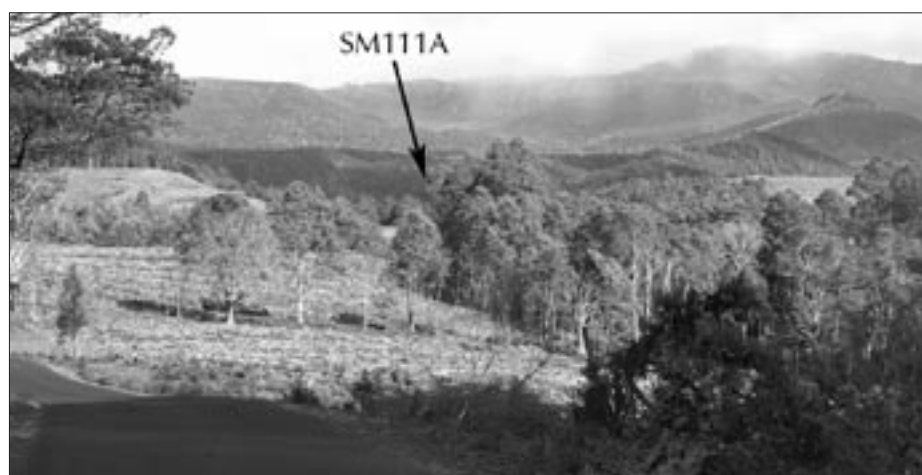
coupe shapes and designed a harvest boundary that, in theory, would result in the operation being invisible from the lookout.

Communication and engagement of interested parties was a key to the success of this operation. Meetings were held with CABWG during the planning, roading and harvesting stages of the operation. The team attended a Central Coast Council meeting to discuss the issue and to demonstrate the Visual Nature Studio software.

Once the team had developed a theoretical solution, it was decided to monitor the operation to ensure the desired result was achieved in the field. We monitored the operation from the lookout with a telescope on a daily basis to ensure that the operation remained unseen.

The Advocate on Wednesday 24th March 2004 reported the operation as being a "win-win" for Forestry Tasmania and the local community.

In this case, we harvested the forest profitably and met the concerns of the community. I see this as one of the challenges ahead for forestry in Tasmania – to provide the financial benefits of a sustainable forest industry to the people of Tasmania, while managing the forest in a socially acceptable manner.



The view from Leven Canyon carpark (top) and the lookout (bottom) during the harvesting operation. The cleared land and plantation in the foreground is privately owned. The arrow in the top photograph shows coupe SM111A part-screened behind a clump of tall native trees. (Photographs by Forestry Tasmania.)



Aerial photo of the harvested coupe, looking north towards the lookout. (Photograph by Forestry Tasmania.)

Forest Practices Awards 2007

Mark Wapstra

Mark received the award for excellence in research, advice and services to forest managers.

Evidence of Mark's broad knowledge as an all-round naturalist can be seen in the roles he has taken on in the Forest Practices Authority (FPA). He started off as a Technical Officer, became a Scientific Officer and has been Acting Environmental Officer, Acting Senior Zoologist and Acting Senior Botanist.

Mark then became the FPA's first Senior Ecologist, where his broad naturalist knowledge was a vital ingredient in the successful integration of flora and fauna advice through the FPA's Ecology Program. He left the FPA in 2006 to form his own consultancy company, ECOtas.

Mark was involved in research, monitoring, planning tool development and policy and prescription development – to name but a few. Mark will be remembered for his commitment to integrating information from a variety of sources into practical forest management. He would take care to explain matters in layman's terms to fieldworkers and landowners but equally importantly, he would take time to listen and learn from the experience of field staff.

Nominators' comments

Mark was nominated by Sean Blake, FPO and consultant, Brian French, consultant, and the FPA's Fred Duncan, Senior Botanist, and Sarah Munks, Senior Zoologist. They said of him:

'It is fair to say that the high standards Mark set for himself had flow-on effects to FPOs, fellow FPA staff and others who worked with him. Tasmania's forest practices system is based on continuing improvement through cooperation and education. In his work with the FPA, Mark was a catalyst and an untiring worker to ensure that this objective was achieved.'



Mark says...

I started in 1995 with the Forest Practices Unit as a Technical Officer. It was a great job for me as it was exactly what I wanted to do – applied conservation management. I have to admit that I was straight out of University and pretty naïve.

I remember reading the *Forest Practices Code* in the State Library the morning of my job interview. In the interview Fred Duncan, the Senior Botanist, put me on the spot with my field botany skills. I think I got most species wrong so I'm glad they still employed me.

. Originally I did mainly zoological work and then got into more of the botanical side – my botanical knowledge had improved a lot (thanks mainly to Fred Duncan and Andy North).

Looking back over my time with the FPA, the achievement which really stands out is working with Forest Practices Officers (FPOs) to achieve good results on the ground, whether this be through trying to resolve some

sort of operational issue on a particular plan, or undertaking research on some value or another.

The projects on threatened flora which I worked on with Fred stand out particularly. They would start off as operational issues to do with a threatened species in a proposed coupe and extend to involving the district and having an impact on how that species was managed in other areas. They were often stand-alone projects which would increase our knowledge and result in action on the ground.

An important part of working in the forest practices system is the collaboration between the FPA specialists, other experts and the practitioners in field. A good example of this is forest wiregrass which we worked on with Tim Ashlin from Forestry Tasmania in Smithton. In Victoria and New South Wales forest wiregrass is a pest species with some of the highest fuel loads in Australia. We worked with Forestry Tasmania, the Tasmanian Herbarium and the Threatened Species Section (DPIW) to research forest wire grass' habitat characteristics, distribution and conservation status. The conclusion was that forest operations were unlikely to affect the grass. Monitoring by Forestry Tasmania has confirmed this.

Another example of FPA's work on threatened flora species is our work on *Thismia rodwayi*, a bizarre plant which spends most of its life underground. This project involved collaboration with the University of Tasmania, Forestry Tasmania's conservation section, Forestry Tasmania districts, private landowners and other consultants. The project continued with long-term monitoring.

Providing advice to FPOs preparing Forest Practices Plans (FPPs) was also a major part of my role with the FPA. The article in *Forest Practices News*



Mark Wapstra



Fred Duncan and Sean Blake, two of Mark's nominators, congratulate him on his award after the ceremony.

in September 2006 on preparing an FPP for a coupe near Southport is an excellent example of the process involved. Terry Ware, another Forest Practices Awards winner, was also involved. At first, some of the issues associated with special values in

the coupe can seem serious but normally these are not insurmountable problems. We examined them and worked together to resolve these issues. In the Southport example, a key event was a combined field trip with Forestry Tasmania staff, FPA specialists and other

experts to look at the issues. After that we drafted prescriptions to manage for these special values.

An important part of drafting prescriptions is to get out into the forest and meet with the people involved. Often as soon as you get to the site, the issues resolve readily, or are different to how they appeared on paper. This is the way all the specialists at the FPA work.

It's important for FPA specialists to have a good relationship with FPOs. They are a pivotal link between the specialists and the FPP. They also provide the link between the specialists and the land managers or owners.

When I first started working with the forest practices system, I thought it was a static system. But it soon became apparent that there are regular and substantial changes to the system. It sounds like a bit of a cliché, but the wording in the *Forest Practices Act 1985* really encapsulates the forest practices system when it talks about the system being based on continual improvement and co-operation. It's these key words which make the system work.



Mark providing advice in the forest when working as an FPA specialist. The photograph on the right shows Mark instructing a logging supervisor and a contractor about chaostola butterfly habitat near Coles Bay in eastern Tasmania (photograph by Brett Miller).

New Forest Conservation Fund programme to protect Tasmania's old growth and under-reserved forests

The new Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) is offering financial incentives to private landowners who wish to protect their old growth and under-reserved forest for future generations to enjoy.

An initiative of the Australian Government, the FCF was developed through the 2005 Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement as a voluntary programme to protect up to 45,600 hectares of private forested land in Tasmania. The target includes a minimum of 25,000 hectares of old growth forest.

The programme will support landowners with forest who are willing to place a conservation agreement on their forested land.

There are many benefits for landowners taking part in the FCF programme. For example, under the bidding process, landowners nominate how much money they are seeking to protect the forested land and they can continue to use the protected area for some business needs, such as occasional grazing and firewood collection.

Active management is needed to maintain the quality of forested areas and the decision to put a conservation agreement in place is an important one for landowners.

Many Tasmanian farmers are already good custodians of the land and it is hoped that FCF support will encourage landowners to expand their efforts to significantly enhance the conservation of Tasmania's native forests.

A steering committee has been formed to coordinate and implement the programme comprising members of both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

In addition, the FCF Steering Committee is supported by an Advisory Group to obtain feedback from stakeholders about the design of the programme and their input will continue to be sought throughout the programme to ensure it successfully meets landowners' needs and achieves the FCF's objectives.

Landowners interested in participating in this voluntary tender process need to submit a confidential proposal to the FCF service provider, the KPMG (Tasmania) consortium.

The KPMG consortium will be responsible for engaging landowners in the FCF, administering the delivery of the programme and managing the subcontracted conservation advisors.

The conservation advisors are independent, experienced in assessing

Tasmanian vegetation and understand farm management practices.

They will perform the free, non-binding site assessments to determine the conservation value of the forested land and will provide information and support to landowners who submit proposals.

The independent panel will assess proposals against criteria developed from the FCF objectives. The criteria include:

- **Significance:** The conservation status of the forest and the presence of old growth forest on the land.
- **Service:** The condition of the forest will be analysed to ensure the conservation management actions will protect or improve the state of the land.
- **Security:** The duration of the conservation agreement offered in the proposal must be long enough to make a significant difference to the FCF's conservation efforts.

For more information on the FCF or to receive an information kit on the programme, contact the FCF hotline on 1300 854 456, log onto www.environment.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf/ or email fcf@environment.gov.au



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Forward Training Programme – Forest Practices Authority confirmed and proposed training 2007

Course (Contact)	Timing	Duration	Location	Course Content
Forest practices training for supervisors ¹ (Chris Mitchell)	14-17 May 2007	4 days	Ulverstone	General training in forest practices for forest industry supervisors
Quarry Forest Practices Officer ¹ (Chris Mitchell)	24-25 May 2007	2 days	Geeveston	Train quarry managers who will then be given the authority to certify FPPs for quarries
Fauna course	May 2007	2 days (each)	NW, Launceston, Hobart	Provision of ecological and management information of threatened species in each region. Revision of planning tools
Fauna field days (Ecology program)	Autumn 2007	1 day	To be advised	Accreditation in eagle nest search methods and nest activity checking methods
Cultural heritage (Denise Gaughwin)	Autumn 2007	4 days	To be advised	Provides accreditation in cultural heritage with emphasis on the recognition, recording and management of Aboriginal and Historic sites
Fauna field days (Zoology program)	July 2007	1 day	NW Tasmania	Update on latest giant freshwater crayfish research and management tools
Risk assessment (Chris Mitchell)	Winter 2007	1 day	northern Tasmania	Train additional FPOs involved in FPP preparation to conduct risk assessments where trees are being retained under the <i>Forest Practices Code</i>
Landscape simulations and 3D analysis workshop (Bruce Chetwynd)	Winter 2007	1 day	To be advised	Sharing of techniques and expansion of skills on seen-area/ 3D analysis and computer simulations of forest landscapes
2007 Forest Practices Officer course (Chris Mitchell)	July-October 2007	12 days total	Various	Pre-requisite course for appointment as FPO
Invertebrate field day (Zoology/Ecology program)	Spring 2007	1day	NW Tasmania	General introduction to invertebrate conservation via the forest practices system, with a focus on threatened invertebrates in NW

¹ Course will be run jointly by Forestry Tasmania and Forest Practices Authority and is dependent on demand.

Forest Practices Officers: are you moving?

To help us maintain an accurate database and to ensure that circulars reach you, please advise us if you are transferring, resigning or retiring.

Adrienne, Joan and Sheryl. Phone:(03) 6233 7966 Email: info@fpa.tas.gov.au



Introducing Andrew Hammond

Recently, I landed the job as geoscientist with the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) after working for the last eight years in Brisbane as a researcher and university lecturer. The major attraction of returning to Tasmania was lifestyle and the opportunity to work within such diverse landscapes as Tasmania offers.

I have a BSc in Geology and Honours in Geomorphology. My honours project was searching for remnants of glacial features in the wild and rugged West Coast Range. These were then pieced together like a jig saw puzzle to work out the sequence and chronology of landscape forming events. This study was undertaken under the enthusiastic guidance of Eric Colhoun, now emeritus professor at Newcastle University.

I then had a change in direction and decided to undertake a Master's degree in soil science (Pedology, which is the study of soil genesis and characterisation) at Lincoln College (now Lincoln University) in New Zealand. After my western Tasmania experiences I was once again "lured" to wet and rugged glaciated landscapes. This time I undertook a thesis on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand.

After this I returned to my geological roots by undertaking a PhD in Earth Sciences at Massey University in New Zealand. Freshly armed with my new qualifications, I aimed to make for Western Australia to seek my fortune in the mineral exploration industry. Many of my geology colleagues had already made the move there and had regaled me with their adventures in the outback. Unfortunately, my timing was all wrong. It coincided with a major downturn in the mining industry in the late 80s and early nineties. Many geologists were out of work. Some were driving cabs, others retraining as teachers, selling real estate or getting into the IT industry to take advantage

of the looming 2YK bug in computers. Consequently, I veered towards academia.

I gained a short-term lectureship teaching geomorphology and environmental science at the University of Tasmania. This was followed by travel, working as a land resource officer for the former DPIWE and more recently lecturing stints at Griffith University, the University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology (QUT). For the past few years I have been working within the School of Natural Resources and a research centre, the Institute of Sustainable Resources, at QUT. Tasks involved the supervision and training of postgraduate students; grant writing, undergraduate lecturing, consultancies and my own research.

Much of my research at QUT has been undertaken in the south-eastern Queensland coastal fringe, particularly on the Sunshine and Fraser (not Fraser Island) Coasts within the extensive plantations run by Forestry Plantations Queensland (formerly Queensland DPI Forestry). Southeast Queensland is the fastest population growth area within the country. Consequently, this area is faced with many environmental issues associated with the expansion of the

coastal metropolitan cities, often into the bordering agricultural and forestry lands. Much of my research and postgraduate supervision has been in:

- the hydrogeological characterisation of these coastal plains
- land and water resource management
- quaternary geology and geomorphology of the SE Queensland coastal zone
- mass movement in Queensland
- conducting soil surveys in forestry lands.

I have undertaken research trips to western Queensland to work on wind erosion and dust storm monitoring within the western Queensland Channel Country, looking at Quaternary climate change within the north-western Kimberley in Western Australia and undertaking an aerial photograph survey of the major rivers draining into the Gulf of Carpentaria.

I am a keen bushwalker and am looking forward to spending my leisure time in the Tasmanian bush, particularly in the subalpine and alpine landscapes.

Author contact:

Andrew.Hammond@fpa.tas.gov.au



Andrew and postgraduate students in a south east Queensland plantation investigating soil water and chemistry.





Amendment of the *Forest Practices Act 1985* and Regulations

Amendments to the Act and Regulations are scheduled to be proclaimed on 30th April 2007. The amendments to the Act provide for the protection of threatened non-forest vegetation types. Any clearance and conversion of such communities will be prohibited other than in exceptional circumstances. Normal management activities such as grazing and burning that do not cause long term changes to the vegetation community are not constrained by the new legislation.

Changes to the Regulations provide further exemptions from the need to have a forest practices plan in prescribed circumstances. The new exemptions include harvesting or clearing carried out in relation to:

- Electricity infrastructure, where the clearing is carried out in

accordance with an environmental management system approved by the FPA;

- Dam works authorized by a permit under the Water Management Act 1999
- The maintenance of existing infrastructure such as roads, fences, buildings and constructed drainage channels
- The clearance of regrowth from previously cleared and converted land (where 'regrowth' is defined as native vegetation that does not contain more than 20 plants of any species of eucalypt more than 2 metres in height within any area of 0.5 hectares. 'Previously cleared and converted land' means land where the owner can demonstrate a history of agricultural or other non-forest land use over a consecutive period of no less than five years since 1985).

Briefings on the new legislation and the review of the code for all FPOs are

currently underway.

20th Anniversary of the Forest Practices Code

The year 2007 marks the 20th anniversary of the first *Forest Practices Code* and the appointment of Forest Practices Officers. The FPA will be organizing an event later this year to mark this milestone. It will be great to see the remaining Old Growth FPOs from the class of '87 mixing it with the younger regrowth FPOs from more recent years! In the meantime, a review of the Code has commenced with an expert panel convened to review the biodiversity provisions of the Code. The Forest Practices Advisory Council is shortly to appoint a working group to review the other provisions of the Code. FPOs will be actively engaged in the review.

Graham Wilkinson

Chief Forest Practices Officer

The perils of wildlife

As foresters, we accept the law of the jungle when we venture out into our working environment. Many Australian foresters have given curt advice to herpetologically-challenged Kiwi foresters who nervously loiter at the road edge and ask 'are there any snakes in this forest?' When I was working in NSW, I remember some visiting Burmese foresters who asked if we would be accompanied by a bearer in case of tigers. In America, it is poison ivy and hornets that can seriously damage your health.

But for me it is the orangutans of Borneo that pose the most chilling threat to forest workers. On a recent visit to Sabah the local forester told me that he had orangutans in his logging areas. Thinking about those wonderful images of our cute and friendly close relations I asked him 'Are they timid or can they be dangerous if threatened?' He was quick to assure me that he had never heard of anyone being attacked but he did have one worker who found himself confronted by a large orangutan who, with studious interest, proceeded to systematically strip him of

his clothes. Eventually the worker, stark naked, was found wandering along a forest road.

'Was it a male or female orangutan?' I asked. My host shrugged and philosophically observed 'Who knows, would it really matter?' Puts a whole new meaning to the lyrics 'When you go down to the woods today you're in for a big surprise!.....'

Graham Wilkinson

Chief Forest Practices Officer

Farewell from the Chair of the Board of the Forest Practices Authority

Isobel Stanley talks to the Editor about her time as Chair of the Board of the Forest Practices Authority. Isobel has resigned as Chair and will be returning to Scotland.

Isobel, it's almost two years since Forest Practices News last interviewed you. Then, in November 2005, you had been Chair of the new board for four months. How has your time as Chair been?

My time as Chair has been very challenging, but my task has been made easier thanks to the dedicated staff of the Forest Practices Authority.

They are professional people working co-operatively. It's evidence of our commitment to the forest practices system that we have such excellent staff working here. Many people could

get better paid jobs elsewhere, but they choose to stay working within a sometimes controversial area because of their dedication.

I think the board is robust and well balanced, which has meant that we have been able to tackle challenges well. We are asked for opinions on a range of policy matters which may not entirely agree with the expectations of all stakeholders, but this is a healthy thing.

I feel as if I'm leaving unfinished business, but the board is now in a position where it knows where it is going and I'm positive the good progress will continue.

We developed a three-year strategic plan and I am proud to say nearly all the goals for this year have been accomplished.

What have the challenges been for you in this role?

There have been quite a few challenges. It took longer than I would have liked for me to gain a good understanding of the workings of a complex system of processes. I don't think people should just rush in and change things without first understanding why things are the way they are. Change should only come from a position where adequate consideration of all the issues has been taken.

The significant change in the board from a representative body to an expert based board meant that virtually all board members were new. Some sectors of the industry were concerned about a lack of forest industry representation on the board and this led to some initial resistance to the new structure. But for the system to work, we need good dialogue and openness with the community and industry representatives. If there are problems, they need to be brought to the board's attention so that we can work together to resolve the issues

I have little tolerance of people who try to manipulate the system for their own ends whether they be members of the community or industry. I am very up-front and I have little time to deal with people with hidden agendas. I think that has been a very challenging situation for me to adapt to, especially the ill-informed debate often played out in the media

What channels are there for this dialogue to take place?

The board identified improving communication with stakeholders as a high priority. We have looked for opportunities to engage widely with stakeholder groups to try and breakdown any feelings of mistrust in the system. The board has identified a number of forums where we can clarify our role.

A significant group with stakeholder representation is the Forest Practices Advisory Council and the board is now providing more feedback to that body on our activities. However, I think FPAC could be better used by the forest industry and it's not realising its strategic advantage. Currently it deals largely with technical issues, but these could be dealt with by sub-committees.

FPAC could be a more strategic representative body which could raise issues and develop policy which it would send to the board. This would give industry a channel for dialogue, rather than using other methods such as lobbying politicians.

What achievements are you most proud of since becoming Chair?

I do think the board has been acknowledged for its significant expertise by a range of stakeholders and this is a really satisfying position to be in.

I am also very pleased that during my tenure we established the Annual Forest Practices Awards. I really firmly



Isobel presenting the Forest Practices Awards during the ceremony in March this year.



Farewell from the Chair of the Forest Practices Authority Board

believe that good performance needs to be publicly recognised and we did this at a ceremony last month. It was a real watershed to acknowledge industry people who have been carrying out excellent forest practices over a number of years and quietly going about their business. The forestry industry gets a lot of bad publicity from some quarters who are subsequently very silent in recognising high achievers. I think the annual awards will go from strength to

strength and the public will start to get a better balance in their perception of the industry.

How do you feel about moving on?

I have been in Tasmania for 21 years, so it will be a big wrench. In that time I have worked in government, industry and consulting. When I was asked to be Chair I took it as a huge compliment

and I relished the opportunity it gave me. Working with the board has given me a great sense of achievement.

I leave behind a forest practices system to be proud of. It is as good as, if not better than, those in other states and countries. It is a great example to others – in the rest of Australia, developing countries and even other developed nations.

The Forest Practices Authority Student Research Awards – two new recipients

The Forest Practices Authority has awarded grants to two students who are carrying out applied research which will contribute to the development of the forest practices system. The grants, advertised on the FPA web site, are available for university post-graduate students (or equivalent) for research expenses up to the value of \$2000 per project.

What perceptions do people in local government have of the forest practices system?

Jo Field returned to full-time study at the University of Tasmania in February this year to complete her environmental science degree, after working for nearly three years with Forestry Tasmania as Bass District's Community Liaison Officer. Jo will carry out her Environmental Research Project, which is largely developed by the student, and is designed as a precursor to Honours.

Jo received the FPA Student Research Award to undertake her research project in an area she has been working in for the last few years – the relationship between the community and the forest. The project will examine the public perceptions of existing forest landscape practices. Jo has decided to focus her research on the 29 local councils in Tasmania and

will survey the elected representatives and council staff on their knowledge and perception of the forest practices system.

Information obtained from the survey will assist in gaining an indication of the level of knowledge and awareness in local government of the forest practices system in general and the role of the FPA in particular. The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) has also endorsed the project.

At the end of the project, Jo will present the FPA and the Local Government Forestry Consultative

Committee (LGFCC) with a summarised analysis of information gathered. From the analysis, the FPA and LGFCC may be able to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the current information communicated to local government on issues such as co-regulation, forestry planning, communities' attitude to forestry within their municipalities, and plantation establishment. It is anticipated that this report will be presented in October 2007.

Jo can be contacted on fielddwyer@aapt.net.au



As Community Liaison Officer for Forestry Tasmania's Bass District, Jo worked on a project with the Mineral Resources Tasmania and community to develop the Anchor Stampers as a tourist attraction interpreting tin mining in the Blue Tier's area, near Lottah, north-eastern Tasmania.



The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Forest Practices Authority. Articles from this newsletter may be reproduced. Acknowledgment of the author & FPA is requested.

The Forest Practices Authority Student Research Awards – two new recipients

In search of the sleeping possum

Lisa Cawthen is a born and bred Tasmanian who became interested in fauna management during her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Tasmania, where she majored in Geography and Environmental Studies and Zoology. Her interest in scientific research for forest management led her to a seminar on the hollow resource. Back then, little did she realise that that one seminar would lead her to FPA's door and initiating her very own project looking at hollow-dependent fauna.

The Tasmanian brushtail possum, a subspecies of the mainland brushtail possum, is Tasmania's most widespread and abundant arboreal marsupial. However no studies have examined the denning behaviour of this animal particularly in relation to its use of tree hollows. This is despite that fact that a plethora of studies have been undertaken on its mainland cousins the mountain and leadbeater possums. Lisa considers that such information is critical as we live in an uncertain time where climate change, new diseases (such as the Devil Facial Tumour Disease) and the introduction of foxes threatens our unique fauna. She believes that we should not be complacent with the notion that such fauna will always be around because, as we have seen from the case of the Tasmanian Devil, we never know what is around the corner.

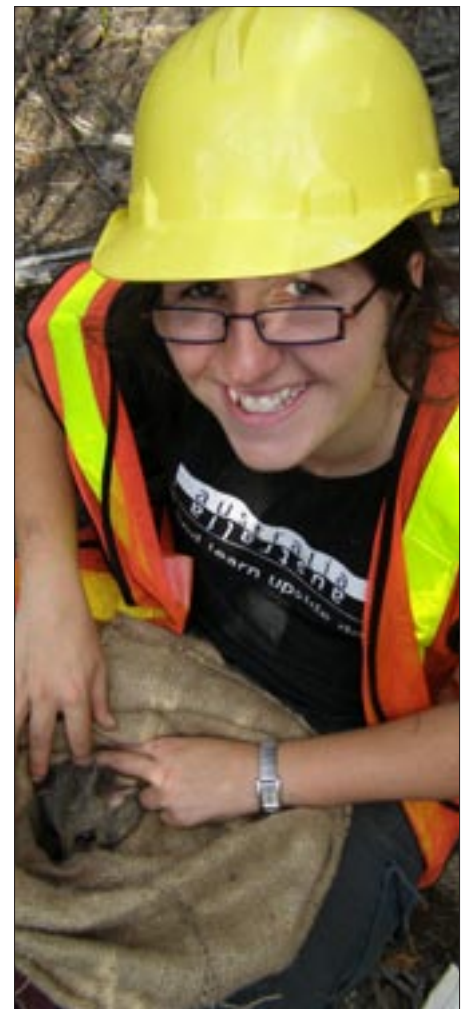
Lisa's study aims to gather information on the hollow requirements of the common brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula fuliginosus*) in the logged

and unlogged dry sclerophyll forest of south-eastern Tasmania. By using radio-tracking, she will be able to gather information on the number, frequency and co-occupancy of den sites and compare this between logged and unlogged sites. In addition, she will establish the value of alternative den sites such as logs and the value of patches of retained hollow bearing trees (wildlife habitat clumps) to brushtail possums. She will also build on the research carried out by Amy Koch, a PhD student supported by the FPA, who examined the use versus the availability of hollow-bearing trees in dry and wet *E. obliqua* forest. Lisa will extend this research by looking at the particular attributes of hollow-bearing trees occupied by brushtail possums.

This work will be co-supervised by Sarah Munks and undertaken in the FPA's research sites established to monitor the survival and use of wildlife habitat clumps. Another related project also being carried out at these sites is Erin Flynn's masters project (see *Forest Practices News* December 2006, vol 7 no 4, available on the FPA website). Lisa's project will be the first to provide detailed information on the denning behaviour of the Tasmanian brush-tailed possum and the effectiveness of wildlife habitat clumps in conserving habitat for medium sized hollow-dependent fauna. The models developed from this study will be coupled with information from previous studies on the hollow resource in Tasmania's dry forest to better describe the type and amount of trees that need to be retained for medium-sized hollow-dependent

fauna in Tasmania's dry forests. The results will be used in the revision of provisions in the *Forest Practices Code* for the retention of trees for fauna conservation.

If you are interested in assisting this project, Lisa is eagerly seeking volunteers to help on trapping and radio-tracking field trips. Please contact Lisa Cawthen on 0439 982237 or at lcawthen@utas.edu.au



Lisa collaring a possum.